

# Ngalakgan language

**Ngalakan** (Ngalakgan) is an Australian Aboriginal language of the Ngalakgan people. It has not been fully acquired by children since the 1930s.<sup>[2]</sup> It is one of the Northern Non-Pama–Nyungan languages formerly spoken in the Roper river region of the Northern Territory. It is most closely related to Rembarrnga.

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## Sounds

### Consonants

Ngalakan has a typical Australian consonant inventory, with many coronal places of articulation (see Coronals in Indigenous Australian languages), including nasals at every stop place, and four liquids, but no fricatives. Baker (1999, 2008) analyses the language as having both geminate and singleton realizations of every plosive consonant. Merlan (1983), however, argues that there is a fortis–lenis contrast, and thus two series of plosives rather than the one shown here. Lenis/short plosives have weak contact and intermittent voicing, while fortis/long plosives have full closure, a more powerful release burst, and no voicing. Similar contrasts are found in other Gunwinyguan languages, such as Bininj Gun-wok,<sup>[3]</sup> Jawoyn, Dalabon, Rembarrnga, Ngandi,<sup>[4]</sup> as well as in the neighboring Yolngu languages.

	Peripheral		Laminal	Apical		Glottal
	Bilabial	Velar	Palatal	Alveolar	Retroflex	
<u>Nasal</u>	m	ŋ	ɲ	n	ɳ	
<u>Stop</u>	p	k	c	t	ʈ	ʔ
<u>Tap</u>				ɾ		
<u>Lateral</u>				l	ɭ	
<u>Approximant</u>	w		j	ɻ		

Ngalakan	
	Ngalakgan
<b>Native to</b>	Australia
<b>Region</b>	Northern Territory
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Ngalakgan
<b>Extinct</b>	2004
<b>Language family</b>	<div>Arnhem<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gunwinyguan<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rembarngic (Jala)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Ngalakan</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></div>
Language codes	
<b>ISO 639-3</b>	nig
<b>Glottolog</b>	ngal1293 ( <a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/ngal1293">http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/ngal1293</a> ) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>AIATSIS</b> <sup>[2]</sup>	N77 ( <a href="https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/australian-aboriginal-languages/language/N77">https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/australian-aboriginal-languages/language/N77</a> )

[5]

## Vowels

	Front	Back
High	i	u
Mid	e	o
Low	a	

## Key features of the language

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- syntactically free, pragmatically determined word order

Free word order, with no syntactically governed positions for subject, object, verb etc. in a sentence. All this information is encoded in the morphology, which results in highly complex word structures. Interpreting these complex words correctly is crucial in determining what the speaker is trying to say.

- Unlike most polysynthetic languages, Ngalakgan is almost entirely agglutinating
- Compounding is a productive process in Ngalakan which applies to all major lexical categories: noun+adjective, noun+verb adverb+verb
- suffixation for argument(ergative, genitive, dative) local semantic roles(locative, allative, ablative, perlocative) and number.

[6]

## References

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1. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Ngalakgan" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/ngal1293>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
  2. N77 (<https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/N77>) Ngalakan at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
  3. Fletcher & Evans 2002
  4. Heath 1978
  5. Brett J. Baker (2008).
  6. Brett J. Baker (2008).
- Baker, Brett (2008). *Word structure in Ngalakgan*. Stanford: CSLI.
  - Fletcher, Janet; Evans, Nicholas (2002), "An acoustic phonetic analysis of intonational prominence in two Australian languages", *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, **32** (2): 123–140, doi:10.1017/s0025100302001019 (<https://doi.org/10.1017%2Fs0025100302001019>)
  - Heath, Jeffrey (1978). *Ngandi grammar, texts and dictionary*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
  - Merlan, Francesca (1983). *Ngalakan grammar, texts and vocabulary*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

## External links

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- Ngalakan basic lexicon at the Global Lexicostatistical Database (<http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/response.cgi?root=new100&morpho=0&basename=new100\gun\egu&limit=-1>)

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